



# How to move through grief with self compassion

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What made you smile today?

# Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions

Positivity is not just the icing on the cake!

It can help:

- broaden our minds
- build personal resources
- bounce back from life's challenges

[Barbara Fredrickson - Center for Positive Organizations Center for Positive Organizations \(umich.edu\)](#)

# Emotional Balance

Approx. 3:1 ratio of  
positive to negative  
emotions helps us to  
flourish

[Barbara Fredrickson - Center for Positive Organizations Center for Positive Organizations \(umich.edu\)](#)

# Reflection


1. Think about a time when a close friend was grieving/feeling loss. How would you respond to your friend?
2. Think about a time when you were grieving/feeling loss. How do you typically respond to yourself?
3. Did you notice a difference? How might things change if you responded to yourself like a good friend?

# The need for self-compassion

- If there was ever a time to be kind to ourselves, it would be during the experience of our grief.
- However, it is not uncommon that we become highly self-critical and particularly unforgiving to ourselves while we are grieving.

# Self-criticism during grief

- I am grieving incorrectly
- My grief is taking too long
- Something is wrong with me
- I handled things poorly with my loved one
- I'm dwelling on what could have been different – what I should or shouldn't have done



*“It isn’t what happens to us that causes us to suffer; it’s what we say to ourselves about what happens”*

Pema Chodron



# Softening grief with self compassion

- Self compassion is not an antidote for grief but it can soften the hard edges of our grief
- The goal is not to push aside, dismiss or ignore your difficult feelings
- It is to treat yourself and talk to yourself in the same way that you would a trusted friend

# What is Self-Compassion?

- Mindfulness - Aware that we are suffering

- Common Humanity - Realising that we are not alone – we're human, and everyone suffers

- Kindness - Being kind to ourselves - friendly, generous, gentle, caring and helpful

[Self-Compassion – Dr. Kristin Neff](#)

# Self Compassion

- Self-compassion is simply the process of turning compassion inward.
- We are kind and understanding rather than harshly self-critical when we fail, make mistakes or feel inadequate.
- We give ourselves support and encouragement rather than being cold and judgmental when challenges and difficulty arise in our lives.

[Self-Compassion – Dr. Kristin Neff](#)



# Research on Self Compassion

Self-compassion is one of the most powerful sources of coping and resilience we have available to us, radically improving our mental and physical wellbeing.

[Self-Compassion – Dr. Kristin Neff](#)

# Research on self compassion


- Self criticism does *not* help to motivate us.
  - Just like you wouldn't be harsh and unkind with a child to help them reach their goals, being gentle and encouraging is more motivating.
- Self compassion can be fierce as well as gentle – you can fiercely protect yourself and your boundaries just like a mummy bear protects her cub.

# What self compassion is not

- Self pity
- Self indulgence
- Self esteem

# Putting self compassion into action

- **Be present** in your grief
- Remember that suffering and grief are both an important and inevitable part of **being human**.
- Meet your grief with **kindness**.



How can you build your mental fitness to keep you well and happy?

Without it feeling like something else to be done!!





# Being Present

[Wandering mind not a happy mind – Harvard Gazette](#)



# Mindfulness is simple:

It's not about what you do. It's about how you do things.

# RAIN practice for Self Compassion


- **R** = Recognise how you're feeling
- **A** = Allow what you're feeling
- **I** = Investigate what it feels like
- **N** = Nurture yourself with understanding and care

Tara Brach, *Radical Compassion*



# Allowing yourself to be yourself

What do you truly love to do?



*We often wait for kindness, but being kind to yourself can start now.*

Charlie Mackesy, The boy, the mole, the fox and the horse

# Suggested Reading

- **Mindful Compassion** by Paul Gilbert and Choden
- **Self Compassion** by Kristin Neff
- **Radical Compassion** by Tara Brach
- **The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion** by Christopher Germer
- **Positivity** by Barbara Fredrickson